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CIA and Harvard

Last year, Harvard University established guidelines to prevent the use of its staff and campus for secret activities of U.S. intelligence agencies. Last week, Harvard University President Derek G. Bok told the Senate Intelligence Committee that the Central Intelligence Agency intends to ignore those guidelines.

Bok released to the committee his correspondence with CIA Director Stansfield Turner, in which Turner insisted on a CIA right to use secretly faculty, administrators and students for recruitment purposes and for intelligence collection.

Bok wants no CIA covert activities on his campus or on any other, and he urged the committee to include such a ban in any new charter for U.S. intelligence agencies.

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The Harvard guidelines allow Harvard to do research for intelligence agencies as long as the research contracts are made public. Individual faculty members do not have to make public their intelligence work, but they must disclose it to the deans of their departments. These seem reasonable guidelines — although apparently not to the CIA.

Both Bok and a CIA spokesman said last week that it is up to Congress to settle this dispute. Congress should not sanction the CIA's cavalier dismissal of Harvard policy. Secret campus activity by intelligence agencies should be banned, at the least, at academic institutions that expressly forbid it, if not banned at all U.S. campuses.